



Fraud Newsletter

June 2007

Sheriff Steve Mansfield

Fraud and ID Theft Information – To Better Protect the Residents of Lewis County

*"If it's too good to be true
it normally is"*

Fraud is simply a theft by trick. It can take the form of chain letters claiming huge amounts of cash to those who send money in or people claiming they will provide a service and never do.

Identity theft and identity fraud are terms used to refer to all types of crimes in which someone wrongfully obtains and uses another person's personal data in a way that involves fraud or deception for economic gain. This newsletter is intended to keep the public informed of the most recent fraud schemes happening in our county. It will also provide resources to help you take precautions to protect yourself from these vicious crimes.

PROTECT YOUR ID

- 1** Always know who you are providing personal information to
- 2** If you use passwords to access accounts make sure to change them often
- 3** Never provide personal information in response to any unsolicited offer
- 4** Know the company you are dealing with when making online purchases

Current Scams and Frauds Hitting Lewis County

Charitable Contributions

We have all received the phone call from someone who says they are soliciting money for one group or another. The majority of the calls come from Professional Fundraisers and only a small percentage of the money you give gets to the group the fundraiser is representing. If you truly want to support a given group then it is more cost effective to give directly to that group. There is also the chance the group you are receiving the call about is not a registered charity with the Washington Secretary of State. A quick way to check is to go to the web page listed below.

<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/charities/search.aspx>

"Internet fraud is the fastest growing crime in the US"

Money/Property Transfer Job Scams:

It starts off as an offer from an individual or company to do a simple job of transferring money or re-mailing packages. The contact is by email and is from someone you have never really met face to face. The company they represent is outside of the US and claims to need someone in the US to work for them. The pay is good and it seems like the work is very easy. You are told when a package arrives all you have to do is mail it to the company. Everything is going along just fine until the visit from the FBI or the US Postal Inspectors. You have fallen victim to a scam.

Please be aware that:

- No legitimate company will use bank accounts of private individuals for processing payments from its customers.
- No legitimate business will pay 5% or more for international money transfers (for example, \$250 out of \$5000), when banks provide such services for only \$30-50 per transaction and businesses and individuals can set up their own bank accounts in other countries if needed.
- No legitimate company uses private individuals to receive parcels who then re-mail them.

Any job offer involving any of the above activities is a fraud!

"Vigilance is the only real protection against Internet fraud"

Job offers on the internet such as the ones listed involve stolen money and stolen goods. If you participate in these scams, even without criminal intent, you could be held liable and face criminal charges. If you have been recruited, contact the police and notify your bank.



The internet is a powerful tool used by both legitimate businesses and scam artists alike. Always take steps to protect yourself and your personal information as you would protect your home or car.

Other Resources

Phone Busters (Canadian Link) - <http://www.phonebusters.com/>

The Federal Citizen Information Center -
<http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/scamsdesc.htm>

The Federal Trade Commission - <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/>

The FBI Fraud Information page -
<http://www.fbi.gov/maicases/fraud/fraudschemes.htm>

The Internet Crime Complaint Center - <http://www.ic3.gov/>

Lewis County Sheriff's Office Mission Statement

To make a positive difference for members of our community by seeking and finding ways to affirmatively promote, preserve and deliver a feeling of security, safety and quality service.



Sheriff Steve Mansfield

Committed to make a difference.